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The kinds of questions which are going to be included, which are not crisis-related, include the status of SALT II, East-West relations, the state of the North Atlantic Alliance and European developments.

Actually, this is all a read-through from the White House, and I hesitate to take a lot of your time on it because some of your fellows are going to be

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Q Jody answered all those questions.

I am confident that he did.

Hodding, any reaction on the referendum

A Yes. Although we do not have final figures, it appears that the draft constitution has been overwhelmingly approved by the Spanish electorate.

We are, of course, very pleased at this historic step in the transition to democracy in Spain, and wish to congratulate the Spanish people and their leaders on the occasion of this milestone in the development of Spanish democracy.

I would also note that the White House has made an announcement on this which is available there, but if you don't have it there, I have a copy of it here which I will be happy to make available.

Q Hodding, was Ball brought in because there was a feeling in the Administration that there was no one in the Administration who has his expertise? And if the answer is yes, why not?

A I think he was brought in to fill a specific function, which is to remove from the daily business of Government, to take a long-term look at a situation.

I don't think it is a lack of confidence in Government that is at question. It is a lack of time that some of those who are equally competent would have to address this kind of a long-term problem.

Q Hodding, I would like to ask a little nit-picking question on what you said earlier about SALT, just to close a suspicious gap.

Is it possible that there might be a summit level meeting this month on SALT?

A I know of no plans for one.

Q Thank you.

Q Hodding, are you at liberty to say what subjects the Secretary and Ambassador Dobrynin discussed this morning?

A I don't know about this morning. Yesterday afternoon -- when was that meeting?

Q Yesterday.

A Yesterday. While I am not going to be able to give any read-out, it was not the only subject discussed, and I am not going to be able to say what else, but SALT was discussed.

Q Hodding, yesterday, I believe that you said -- you gave us some hope that we would be able to question Mr. McCoy, that in effect he would no longer be unavailable, and so forth, and you didn't specify when.

I am wondering, Hodding, are you saving Mr. McCoy so that his first debut publicly, and so forth or otherwise, will be when he is -- if he is questioned and asked to come to the Hill to the House International Relations Committee? Is that what you had in mind, or what?

A I think the general feeling is that that would be the first and most proper place for him to.

Q That will?

A Yes.

Q In other words, that is why he has been unavailable, he has been kind of kept under wraps, is that correct?

A I can hardly think he has been kept under wraps, since some of the questions that were put to me yesterday came from earlier interviews that individuals had had with him.

Q Hodding, can you take a Middle East question, please?

A Yes.

Q Hodding, the situation in Guyana is rather confused, to say the least. I wondered if you could tell us if the State Department has asked the Guyana Government to give any special consideration to any particular group of American journalists or writers who might be going down there? I ask with reference to the "Ear" item this afternoon.

A That's true, insofar as giving the usual courtesies to somebody who is writing a book. It is also true that in the course of my 20-something months in this job, I've sent out at least two dozen cables asking for the same thing, indicating that somebody is coming to do a certain kind of job.

Q You mean a book or a large article, a long article?

A A long article, or sometimes, in fact, a working reporter who simply is going to spend a specific amount of time there. As a matter of fact, I've never turned down a request from any journalist or writer.

Q But in this case --

A The whole answer is yes.

Q But in this case, it is one writer; and this writer is planning a book.

A Yes, but let me --

Q You're saying it's not unusual?

A But let me repeat that I have never turned down a request from a journalist for that kind of cable assistance.

Q Could you give us an idea what kind of basic courtesies --

A What you usually say is, so-and-so is coming, that the dates are such-and-such, that what he has in mind is whatever it is he has in mind, that we hope that you will be able to provide assistance to him in whatever the functional desires are that he has; i.e., seeing members of the host government.

Q The host government. Not American?

A Well, always you say the same thing. I don't know what was said in this one, but I'm talking about general things.

Q Well, here we all sit, several dozen of us; and you have upstairs sitting on the desk there an American official who, at the very least, played a major part in the Peoples Temple drama. And for a few moments, a couple of networks got in, but that was the end of it. And he's been shielded from the press, and you're being asked if you can produce him, and you can't. And yet I suppose the fellow is writing and going down there, and you'll try to get him interviews with American officials and Guyanese officials. I wonder if there is some lack of equity there. Do you see any problem with that? We can't get at the people sitting in this building.

A Well, I'm not sure that he can either, in this specific case that you're talking about -- that person, that writer -- though I'm not even sure that some of you can't get at this person individually, because you have.

I mean, it's a fair enough question; and the answer is that the procedure that is being followed here is a general one which may be called into some kind of general question. We have been preceded into some stops on trips that we've taken by people going in there ahead of us on the plane, to whom we asked certain kinds of courtesies to be extended.

Q In view of the President's remarks that it would be very, very serious if the December 17 deadline were not met, does that mean that the Secretary, having an open-ended schedule, could stay there through the 17th and initiate a shuttle to try to achieve a peace treaty by that deadline?

A I always have to be careful on this. I could not rule out the possibility; I cannot rule the possibility in. I think that whatever happens out there, as of now the planning is to come back at mid-week; but that is, I have to say, subject as always to change on what you find on the ground.

Q Another subject?

A Yes. I'm sorry. You are next, Les.

Q Sure. A two-part question: What, I wonder, has been the reaction of the State Department towards the death threats to Congressman Murphy and Congressman Wilson by the Sandinistas?

A We view any such threats aimed against any public official as serious matters.

Q Have you said anything about this? Have you made any announcement about this? It's a widely unreported --

A I was asked that a few days ago, Les, I think by Reed, actually. But I'm just saying, of course, we view it seriously. I would add that it is my personal understanding that death threats have been received from various factions in many countries by officials inside this building. All such threats are viewed as possibly dangerous and certainly are not just lightly taken.

Q Does this lead you to the conclusion that the Sandinistas might be terrorists?

A Given the nature of the kind of death threats that come, what you have to believe is that whoever has offered the threats -- and unfortunately with printed, written threats, unless a guy is getting ready to get up in front of a camera and say, "I'm the one who is making the threats," it's a little hard to identify him -- but anybody who makes such threats is clearly operating outside of the framework which we find either acceptable or legal.

Q One follow-up, and that is: In the President's recent reference to the fact that certainly human rights continue to be a capstone of the Carter Administration, with one exception I think he made -- he made reference to self-appointed messiahs who operate under the guise of religion. What is the State Department's assessment of that? Is that considered to include this other colony, that fugitive from Cleveland that has another colony in Guyana, or could this be applied to the gentleman in charge of Libya?

A I think it has to apply generally; and how is applies specifically, you have to deal with in each case.

Let me advance something to you, if you don't mind, on Nicaragua, just where we understand the mediation effort is right now. The opposition had informed the international mediators that before they would agree to discussions with the Government concerning a plebiscite formula, they wanted the Government to lift the state of seige, grant amnesty to those convicted or charged with politically motivated offenses, and abolish remaining censorship rules.

The international mediators relayed this position to the Government. News reports we have seen this morning indicate that President Somoza apparently is disposed to accept the opposition's pre-conditions to substantive discussions of a plebiscite and will announce that willingness at noon our time today. Obviously, if these reports are correct, we would view this as a positive sign which we would be very happy to see. I'm unable, unfortunately, to confirm what happened at noon today.

Q Hodding, I just want to ask you a specific question: Does the U.S. Government have any information about the possibility of a meeting between the Prime Minister of Egypt and the Israeli Minister?

A On that question, I have some difficulty in trying to speak for other governments' plans and would not normally do so, in any case. That really is one that ought to be addressed to the Egyptian and Israeli Governments. It is not a matter in which we have been involved, though. Of course, we would welcome any and all such contacts. Beyond that, I don't have anything to offer.

Q Another question on Guyana: I don't think we've had an updated estimate of the cost of the operation in two weeks. At that time, it was $2 million to $3 million, and this was well before the operation was completed. Did you ever come up with an updated figure?

A I do not have an updated figure. I'm not going to send you on a circular path; but at any rate, major costs were incurred in several places. And, again, figuring them through, the process isn't completed yet. That figure will, of necessity, have to be made public because this is a matter of extreme public interest; but I do not have that figure.

Q The Department also sent a legal adviser to Guyana a week ago, I believe, to see if he could recover some of the money that was left there at Jonestown and to see if it was possible to defray some of these costs. We have not heard from him since he left. Could you --

A That proces of trying to determine whether a legal basis exists for defraying the costs of this operation from assets of the Peoples Temple has not been concluded, and I don't have an interim report to give you. I mean that literally.

Q Hodding, I'd like to follow up George's question.

A O.K. Follow up the question.

Q It's a follow-up, and that is, George asked about trying to recover the money from Guyana. In view of the New York Times interview with Wayne Rubick, who is the attorney for the Disciples of Christ, who was sent from headquarters in Indianapolis to Ukiah, and he admits now that he didn't inspect things very carefully -- he only stayed for one day; he said, I wish I'd done more. Since this is a corporation of the State of Indiana and is an incorporated body, and it was their clergyman, the Reverend Jim Jones, is the State Department considering sending its lawyer to Indianapolis to see what this denomination, the Disciples of Christ, might be prepared to pay for the cost of bringing back all of the victims of one of their ordained clergymen from whom they accepted money?

A Les, I don't know the answer to that. In terms of internal investigations, I don't think State would be sending somebody there; I think that Justice would.

Q Do you know whether Justice is?

A I don't. I'm sorry.

Q I see.

A I recognize how much you all enjoy this tooth-by-tooth approach, but nonetheless I was asked the question yesterday about Mr. McCoy's interviews and the locale for them; i.e., it was alleged, based on some kind of reporting, that some of those interviews had taken place in a radio shack or some place that was easily bugged.

Mr. McCoy tells me that no interviews took place inside of a building, that the interviews were held in the central compound area -- that is to say, close in -- but that either they were held in that kind of area or were held out in the field that he referred to, holding some 40 or so of those 70-something interviews.

In any case, on that specific question, which I did not really in fact take, but I'm just trying to respond to something Reed said yesterday.

Let me see if I have anything else here.